CITY OF BELMONT

STAFF REPORT

Setting the Bi-Annual Council Priority Calendar (Step Two: Ranking the Issues)

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Summary
In 2002, a process for reviewing and prioritizing current and proposed Council "Priority Calendar items" was initiated. These are topics that require significant staff study and are generally placed on the Council agenda for action. The goal of this process is for Council to state their priority for study, clarify the scope and timeline of projects, and prevent issues from arising randomly and overwhelming staff resources without a clear sense of what is most important to the community.

A three-step process is again being utilized:
- At the September 14, 2004 meeting, Council reviewed all current and proposed projects, sought clarification, and provided direction to staff.
- At the meeting of September 28, Council will be asked to rank the new projects (including those "below the line" from the last ranking).
- On October 12, Council will review the rankings and final Project Description Forms (PDFs) for studies staff is able to take on, and approve a six-month Priority Calendar.

PDFs for current and new projects were Attachments B and C to the September 14 report. Please bring them with you to the September 28 meeting. Copies are available from the City Clerk, if needed. Staff recommends Council review the list of new items, drop those that are not priorities, move any below the line, and then rank the remaining issues. After the rankings are tabulated, Council will have an opportunity to review the results and make any desired adjustments.

Background
As a result of an October, 2001 report, the Council Protocols were amended to establish a biannual review of study items and a process for handling Agenda Item #9's because Item 9's were often proposed in isolation of each other and the cumulative impact and interconnectedness wasn't always clear.

Item 9's are now handled as follows:
- Any Council Member can continue to introduce an Item 9 at any time.
- Item #9's that meet the threshold for Priority Calendar issues (or other major projects requested by Council or the City Manager) would have a PDF developed and be added to a "proposed" list as they are suggested. *No Council action is necessary.*
- Council would review the proposed list as well as all pending items twice a year.
- Council would review and approve the "revised" master list to see that the proposed timelines and scopes are appropriate.

♦ For Item 9's that are time sensitive, a vote by a majority of the Council can request that it be taken up "out of order" (before the biannual review). A <u>majority vote</u> would lead to staff developing a PDF and a report to Council with any other relevant background information such as impact on workload.

♦ If, after being presented the PDF and background, the Council wanted to move forward with the item prior to the biannual priority-setting, it would require a <u>super-majority</u> to request staff proceed with the study.

At the September 14 meeting, Council reviewed the PDFs for current and new projects, asked questions of staff and solicited public comments. Council also asked for the estimated number of hours remaining on current projects. That information can be found as a new column in Attachment A.

<u>Discussion</u>

<u>Projects for Ranking</u>
A total of 16 items were included as Attachment C of the September 14, 2004 staff report for ranking by Council. Six of these are new since the last ranking.

The project description forms include a section for a staff recommendation. Generally, staff will make "No Recommendation" as the purpose of this process is for Council to set priorities and provide clear direction to staff. However, in some cases, staff will make a recommendation, in which case there is usually a brief explanation in the "Comments" section at the bottom of the page. As noted at the last meeting, staff is recommending two items be placed "below the line" and two items be a priority for study:

> <u>Staff is recommending placing below the line:</u>
> o PR04 – Art Dedication Fee
> o PR05 – Create an Arts Alliance

> <u>Staff is recommending these items as a priority for study:</u>
> o Athletic Field Use Policy
> o Open Space Sign Program

<u>Ranking Process</u>
September 28 meeting
  ✓ Public comments are invited.
  ✓ Council reviews the <u>current projects</u> (green sheets). A majority vote is suggested to drop, place below the line, or to modify any current items from the list.
  ✓ Council has a discussion on the <u>new issues</u> (blue sheets). Council may want to combine items if they seem related. A majority vote is suggested to **drop, modify or combine** any new items from the list.
  ✓ Council will then **rank all the remaining new items**, *by department*. In other words, if a department has nine items on the final list, each one will be given a ranking from 1-9, with 1 being the top priority and 9 being the lowest priority. A discrete number should

be given to each remaining item.
- ✓ The meeting will proceed with the next agenda item while staff tabulates the results and then reports back to Council.
- ✓ After reviewing the rankings, Council will have the opportunity to review and revise the list.

Between September 28 and October 12:
- Staff will review the list in priority order and determine how many new items can be taken on given existing workloads, and what timelines are realistic for achieving them. Council should keep in mind that <u>the first responsibility of staff is to provide day-to-day services, then current projects, so there is limited capacity for new projects.</u> Staff also has to reserve some time for "miscellaneous things that come up" as much work is demand driven by outside factors. Staff's ability to take on new projects will vary by department and will be based on a number of factors such as staffing levels, the nature of daily operations, the number and complexity of current projects, etc. Recent staffing reductions will impact capacity.
- PDFs with timelines will be completed for those that staff proposes to begin in the next six months.
- Those items that were ranked but that can't be undertaken in the next six months will be placed "below the line" and will automatically come back at the next biannual review.

October 12 meeting
- Staff will bring back the list of what we feel can be accomplished, along with completed PDFs with milestones/timelines.
- Council will have another opportunity to review and revise the list.
- Staff will present a six month Priority Calendar of when these studies and other known items will be presented to Council.

Ranking Sheet
Attachment B to this report is a sample ranking sheet. It shows the issues - by department, estimated number of hours required to complete the project, the estimated cost of doing the study (beyond staff time), the Council ranking from March, and a column for Council Members to fill in their ranking.

Fiscal Impact
There is no direct fiscal impact to this report. Individual projects have cost estimates associated with them on the PDFs. *If a project ranked high enough by Council to be on the Calendar has immediate fiscal implications that can not be funded within budgeted resources, that will be noted when staff brings back the Calendar at the next meeting.*

Recommendation

Staff recommends Council take the following actions:

1. Solicit any public input
2. Make a motion to put the two new items noted in the report "below the line"
3. Make a motion to drop, modify, combine or place "below the line" any other "new" items
4. Rank the remaining "new" items.

Alternatives

1. Modify the ranking process
2. Provide alternative direction to staff
3. Take no action at this time

Attachments

A. Updated Priority Calendar Status Report
B. Ranking sheet

Respectfully submitted,

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Daniel Rich
Interim City Manager